

STATE PROPERTIES REVIEW BOARD

Minutes of Meeting Held On November 24, 2014 State Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut

The State Properties Review Board held its regularly scheduled meeting on November 24, 2014 in the State Office Building.

Members Present: Edwin S. Greenberg, Chairman
Bennett Millstein, Vice Chairman
Bruce Josephy, Secretary
Mark A. Norman
John P. Valengavich

Members Absent: Pasquale A. Pepe

Staff Present: Brian A. Dillon, Director
Mary Goodhouse, Real Estate Examiner

Chairman Greenberg called the meeting to order.

Mr. Josephy moved and Mr. Norman seconded a motion to enter into Open Session. The motion passed unanimously.

OPEN SESSION

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 17, 2014. Mr. Norman moved and Mr. Valengavich seconded a motion to approve the minutes of November 17, 2014. The motion passed unanimously.

REAL ESTATE- UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REAL ESTATE- NEW BUSINESS

PRB # 14-292 **Transaction/Contract Type:** RE / Voucher
Origin/Client: DOT / DOT
Project Number: 170-3155-073
Grantor: The Grove Corporation
Property: 641 Washington Avenue, North Haven
Project Purpose: New Haven – Hartford – Springfield Rail Corridor Improvements Project
Item Purpose: Administrative Settlement for the acquisition of a conservation easement area for highway purposes totaling 20,802 ±SF. The easement is required as a mitigation area for the development of transplant beds required for the relocation of two endangered plant species.

This submittal is for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) Rail Program, the DOT will acquire a defined easement for transportation purposes. DOT is planning to improve the portion of the Amtrak rail corridor between New Haven and Springfield. It is intended that by 2030, there will be up to 25 daily round trip trains between New Haven and Springfield. Total funding (state: 46%, and federal: 54%) of \$262.8 million is required for upgrading the infrastructure, platforms and stations between New Haven

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and Hartford. The track improvements will increase top speed to 110 mph and restore the second mainline track.

The subject property on the east side of the railroad tracks has been identified as a site where DOT can mitigate the affects of the rail project on two endangered plant species. Mitigation requires a 500 square foot transplant bed on a mitigation site. Endangered plants exist on the site and plants located on the west side of the tracks will also be relocated to the site.

The entire property is 1.14 acres in the Light Industrial zone, and is generally triangular in shape, situated between the Amtrak line and Washington Avenue, U.S. Route 5. The southerly portion of the property is improved with a modern 2,760 SF convenience store, gas pumps under a canopy, underground gasoline storage tanks, and a storage shed. The site is owner-occupied. The current use is the highest and best use.

The identified mitigation area is north of a gas station parking lot on property at 641 Washington Avenue (U.S. Route 5), North Haven. While the plants are being established, protective fencing will be placed around the transplant bed. The site will be monitored by a qualified botanist. Rather than purchase the property, since purchase of the mitigation site would leave the remainder of the parcel in non-conformance with local zoning requirements, DOT will protect the mitigation site through the purchase of a conservation easement. The conservation easement will preserve and protect the listed plants and mitigation area in perpetuity.

The owner has prepared a new site plan that would expand the parking, allow for existing underground tanks to be replaced with larger underground tanks; and alter the location of the gas pumps, and increase the pumps from 4 to 6 double faced pumps. DOT was able to alter the project design and reduce the conservation easement area from 23,415 SF to 20,802 SF, a change of 2,613 SF (11%). The parties agreed to the revised conservation easement area as accommodating a modest site redevelopment compatible with the required environmental mitigation for endangered plant species. The alteration in the easement area is only 0.06 acres. In Staff's opinion, the change in the easement area would not significantly alter the appraisal analysis as completed by Norman R. Benedict Associates; the damages in the amount of \$80,000 are well supported by the Benedict appraisal report.

Staff recommended approval of \$80,000 in damages, based an appraisal report, and on the Administrative Settlement Statement, to acquire the vegetative conservation easement area of 20,802 SF, summarized as follows:

	Description	Value/SF of Gross Building Area	Total
Before	1.14 acres, improved with gas pumps & convenience store	\$310.00/SF	\$855,000
After	1.14 acres, improved with gas pumps & convenience store, <i>0.48 acres subject to conservation easement</i>	\$280.00/SF (-9.4%)	\$755,000
Damages			\$80,000

Mr. Norman recused himself from discussion of the next agenda item, and left the meeting at 9:41.

Mr. Josephy moved and Mr. Millstein seconded a motion to go out of Open Session into Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

PRB # 14-293 **Transaction/Contract Type:** RE /Lease Amendment
Origin/Client: DAS/ DDS

Statutory Disclosure Exemptions: 4b-23(e), 1-200(6)(D) & 1-210(b)(24)

The Board commenced its discussion of the proposed lease at 9:42 a.m. and concluded at 9:56 a.m.

Mr. Josephy moved and Mr. Millstein seconded a motion to go out of Executive Session into Open Session. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Norman rejoined the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

OPEN SESSION

ARCHITECT-ENGINEER - UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ARCHITECT-ENGINEER – NEW BUSINESS

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board took the following votes in Open Session:

PRB FILE #14-292– Mr. Norman moved and Mr. Valengavich seconded a motion to approve PRB File #14-292. The motion passed unanimously.

PRB FILE #14-293– Mr. Valengavich moved and Mr. Josephy seconded a motion to suspend PRB File #14-293, pending receipt of additional information regarding the proposed lease agreement. The motion passed unanimously, except for Mr. Norman who abstained from voting.

The meeting adjourned.

APPROVED: _____ **Date:** _____

Bruce Josephy, Secretary